1948

LENTEN OPPORTUNITIES.

Isaiah 1:18-"Come and let us reason together', saith the Lord; Tho your sins be as scarlet they shall be whit as snow; tho they be red like crimson, they shall be white as wool."

INTRO. Lent, a time for reflection.

IN Not a temporary cessation from the social whirl, simply to catch a second wind the better to carry on after Easter.

Not merely a practice of fasting and self-denial as a customary observance of the season.

But an opportunity to face the stern realities and th vexing problems of life, to think things thru to a more thoro understanding and a consequent determination the better to readjust oneself to the requirements of life, of that more abundant life whic alone rewards with a full measure of satisfaction.

The greatest of all the prophets spoke the words of our text in a situation in which Jerusalem and Judah were threatened with certain destruction, except for one way of escape, a return to Jehovah in pure worship and true loyal living, thru fauthful obedience.

Lent itself presents a situation far more critical and tense. Jesus, the the world's greatest light and only true Savior, was facing Gethsemene and Calvary! Surely, our observance of Lent will permit of none other than our most serious reflection and deepest thot.

I. We can only make real progress by thinking things thru.

1. Not all change may be progress. We may be moving very rapidly without getting anywhere. In fact, we may actually be steering ourselves in the wrong direction without realizing it.

a. The slave bidden to steer the boat towards a cer- star while his master slept. His unskillful handling of the boat made it wobble from its course, and he had to call his master, "Massa, come gimme nother star, I'se done sailed past that one."

b. Perhaps a great deal of our boasting that we have gotten past certain old standards is due to our wobbling and ignorant shifting more than to any real progress on our part.

(1) The Bible, faith ~~religion~~, prayer and all th that religion stands for.

2. I1,b(2) The home, true love, and all that virtue and clean living stand for

(3) Honest dealing and square shooting in business Justice and Mercy and the Golden Rule

2. It behooves us then to examine ourselves and determine whether we are truly adjusted to the progress that has actually been made, or whether wa are just being carried along by the onrushing current of worldly events, victims of circumstances instead of masters of our own fates.

II. To think our way thru we need all the help we can get and the best help we can find.

1. As no man can live alone, so no man can think his way thru any subject or problem without adequate aid.

a. We go to the best available authirities in our study of any subject, to the most reliable sources of fullest information.

b. For the correction of self, for that understanding of life and all its requirements for the full realization and development of personal being, where shall we go for our help? To whom shall we turn for instruction?

II2. Jesus Way isstill the highest standard for personal living.

1. But "Oh", you say, "that is a part of the Bible and the Bible is such a deep, complicated, self-contradictory and mis-interpreted book!

Chubb's idea if a simplified Bible, concerning which there can be no misunderstanding and which can be easily and rightly understood by all, young and old.

God made the coal, the oil, and all the other minerals of vital use to man, but why did'nt he put them all on the surface of the earth so we could have them ready to hand? Why make us dig and bore and mine for them?

Why make us think our way thru to a workable understanding of life? Why do we have to dig and bore and mine for our knowledge? Why do we have to search the scriptures with our whole hearts and minds and souls before we find therein spiritual light for our souls, moral guidance for our conduct, eternal principles for the building of

our characters? In the light of our human experience, to ask such questions is to answer them.

III. In so many ways God offers to help us. "Come and let us reason together", saith the Lord.

1. By His Word revealed to us in the Scriptures. The Holy Bible is still a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway.

2. By His Word Living Word in Jesus Christ. The Savior of our lives and the Master-builder of our characters.

3. By His Holy Spirit. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Paul to Romans: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit."

From "Judge"

A N.Y. lawyer, gazing idly out of his window, saw the pretty stenographer across the street sitting in her employer's lap. The lawyer noticed the lettered name on the windows and then searched the telefone book. Still keeping his eye on the window, he called the gentleman up. In a moment he saw them start violently and take down the receiver.

"Yes", said the lawyer thru the fone, "I should think you would start."

The victim swished his arm from its former position and began to stammer something.

"Yes", continued the lawyer severely, "I think you had better take that arm away. And while you're about it, as long as there seems to be plenty of chairs in the room-"

The victim brushed the lady from his lap rather roughly.

"Who, who the devil is this, anyway?" he managed to sputter.

"I", answered the lawyer in deep impressive tones, "am your conscience". And then he hung up.

The application of this supposedly funny story is very plain. We may think we can hide ourselves from one another, but we cannot hide from God or from ourselves- for the Spir

of God and our own Conscience are ever watching us, not seeking to condemn, but to correct when we err and to approve when we do right.

Read verses of 43. in New Songs for Service.

Conclusion. During "Better Homes Week" a drive on to clean In the Spring we up our yards and allys. During this Lenten season lett us seek to clean up our lives

Lets center our minds on the thots of God

Lets direct the desired of our hearts more in keep- with the will of God

Lets walk in daily conduct more in keeping with Jesus' way of right living

By the grace of God and by the power of His Spirit we can do this thing we know we ought to do.- we can R- we will.

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Make Jesus Christ the Pal and Guide of your life, and He will make you as God wants you to be, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him.